

END CITIZENS UNITED

DEMOCRATS FIGHTING FOR REFORM

Taking the Lead On Reform and Money in Politics - Why It's Key

Voters identify money in politics as an important problem that affects their everyday lives.

- They believe the problem of money in politics is getting worse, and that addressing it is as important as “lowering healthcare costs” and “creating jobs and increasing incomes.”

Messages on money in politics break through to swing voters in a way that other conventional Democratic messages do not.

- Messages on money in politics are MORE effective at increasing a Democratic candidate's vote share among key swing voters than traditional Democratic messaging.
- This issue can help Democrats unlock the door with swing voters who are key in the midterms - Independents, white working class voters, rural voters, seniors, and Hispanics.

Money in politics allows Democrats to be for real reform at a time when voters are hungry for change.

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Taking the Lead On Reform and Money in Politics - How to Respond to Attacks

Methodology: online survey among 1,200 voters in battleground states (AZ, FL, IN, ME, MI, MO, MT, ND, NV, OH, PA, TX, VA, WI, WV) who are likely to vote in the 2018 general election. Conducted from June 21- 25, 2017 by Normington Petts.

Attacks of being hypocritical can be effectively rebutted.

- Some candidates might be wary of opening the door to charges of hypocrisy if they discuss the effects of special interest money in politics. They may take money from PACs and lobbyists, or may benefit from super PAC spending in their races.
- It is clear that those charges are easily rebutted by a straightforward call for a change in the system and an overt demand to defeat Republican candidates who want to continue allowing unlimited special interest money in elections.

Fighting over this issue is good territory for a Democratic incumbent.

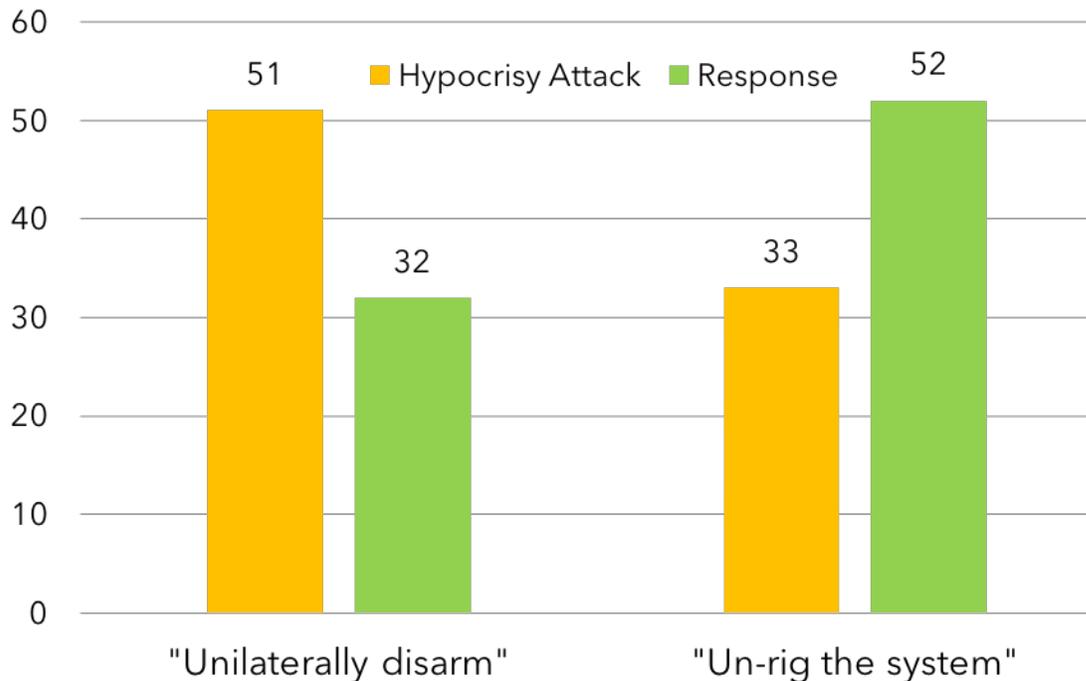
- In a simulated dialogue, a Democratic candidate can trade barbs with a Republican - including being counterpunched with a harsh attack on hypocrisy and an added accusation of getting rich in office - and still come out on top.

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ATTACKED FOR HYPOCRISY? Focusing on the need to defeat candidates who support the status quo on money in politics is a very effective response to charges of hypocrisy, and is far more effective than a more defensive response focused on a candidate's lack of control over outside groups.

Which is closer to your opinion?



HYPOCRISY ATTACK: Candidates who want to reduce the role of special interests but still take contributions from them and allow them to spend money on their behalf are hypocrites. If they want to reform our politics, they should not accept money from special interests or allow them to spend money on their behalf.

"UNILATERALLY DISARM" RESPONSE: If one candidate refuses to accept the money while the other does not, it creates an unequal playing field that will allow the special interests to win. Candidates cannot legally control special interests or how much money they spend anyway.

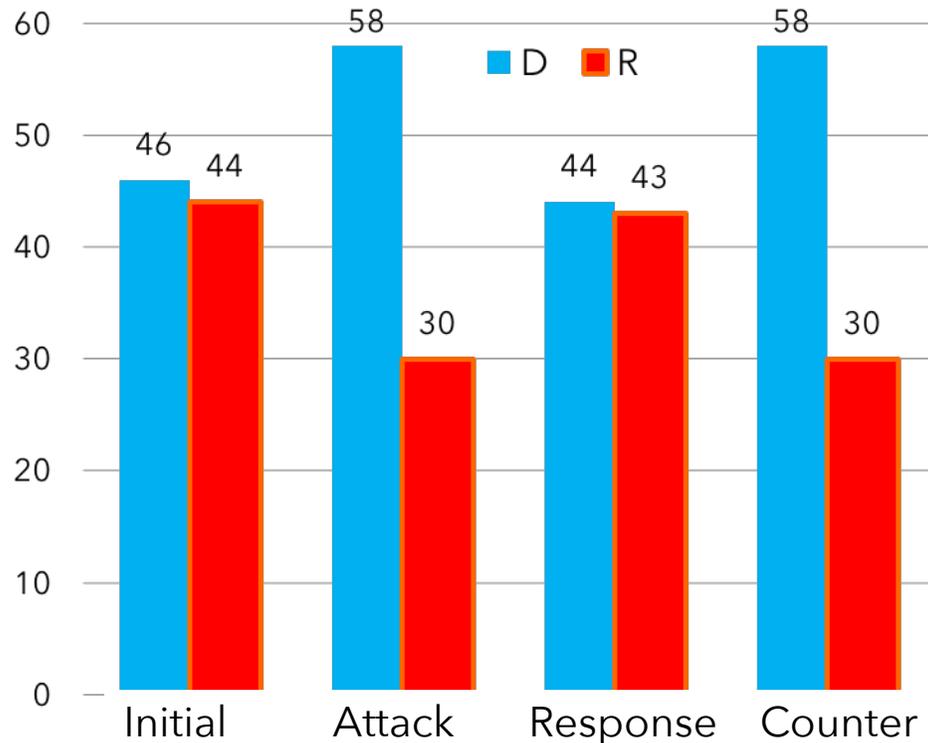
"UN-RIG THE SYSTEM" RESPONSE: The only way to reduce the influence of special interests and change our political system is to defeat candidates who want to allow special interests to continue spending unlimited amounts of money to influence our elections. We must elect candidates who support limits on how much special interests can spend on our elections.

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Even when a Democrat is attacked for hypocrisy, a conversation on money in politics is beneficial.

Vote Movement



ATTACK: The Democrat says the Republican is in the pocket of special interests who are spending unlimited amounts of money to elect him to do their bidding. The Democrat says this flood of money is corrupt because it means the Republican is looking out for the special interests supporting him, rather than real people who want lower prescription drug prices and higher wages. The Democrat says we need to change our corrupt political system so it works for real people, by limiting how much special interests can spend on our elections and requiring that all political donations are public.

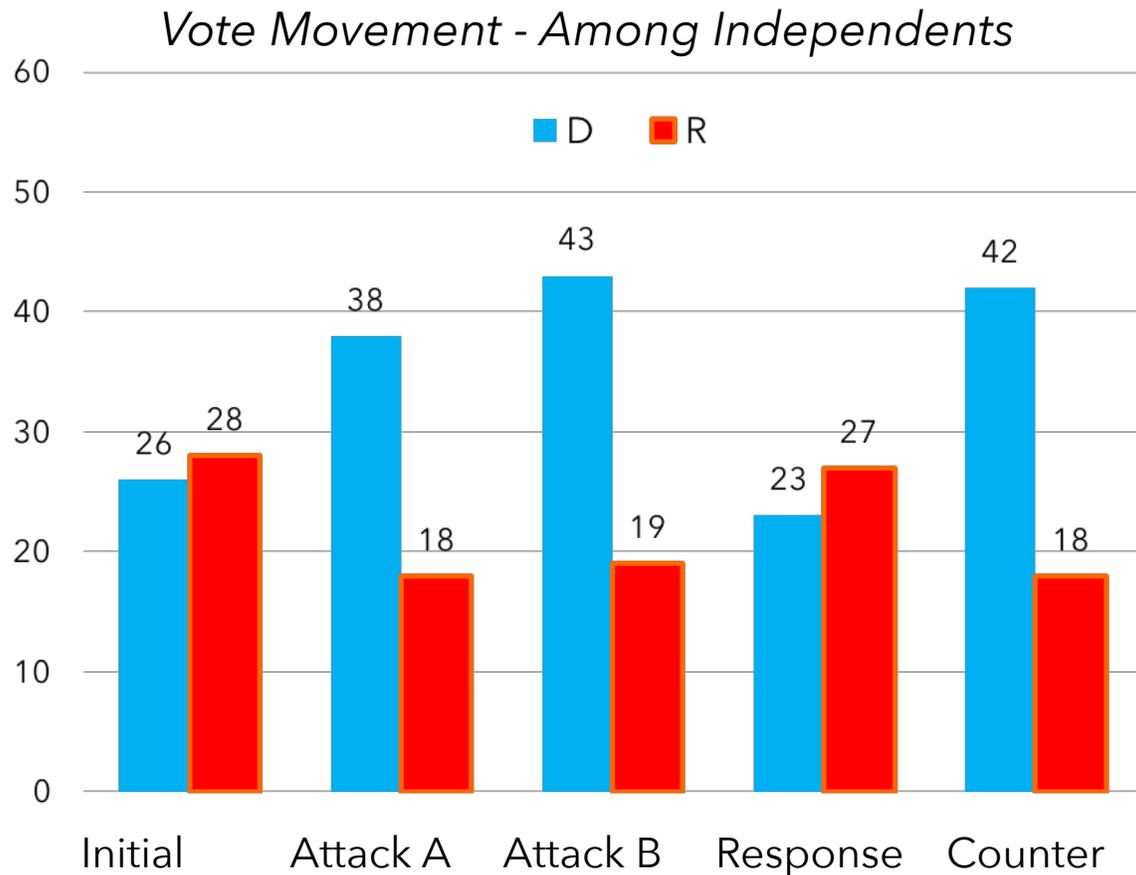
RESPONSE: The Republican says that the Democrat is a hypocrite. The Republican says the Democrat has been in Washington for years, has taken thousands from special interests and corporations, and has even gotten richer while doing so. Plus, the Republican says that if anyone is corrupt it is the Democrat who lets big unions and liberal special interests spend secret and unlimited amounts of money on his behalf. The Republican says these attacks are just politics as usual.

COUNTER-RESPONSE: The Democrat says that the only way to solve the problem is to actually fix the broken system, but that when given the opportunity the Republican has voted against doing that since he's bought and paid for by the special interests who want to keep the system the same. The Democrat supports plans to stop special interests from spending unlimited amounts of money, make sure all secret donations are disclosed, so that politicians pay more attention to real people than their special interests backers. The Democrat says the only way to give the voters back their voices is to elect candidates who want to change the current system like he does.

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Mirroring ECU's other polling that has found Independents respond particularly well to messaging on money in politics, the greatest movement was with Independent voters.



ATTACK A: The Democrat says the Republican is in the pocket of special interests who are spending unlimited amounts of money to elect him to do their bidding. The Democrat says this flood of money is corrupt because it means the Republican is looking out for the special interests supporting him, rather than real people who want lower prescription drug prices and higher wages. The Democrat says we need to change our corrupt political system so it works for real people, by limiting how much special interests can spend on our elections and requiring that all political donations are public.

ATTACK B: The Democrat says the Republican is in the pocket of special interests who are spending unlimited amounts of money to elect him to do their bidding. The Democrat says this flood of money is corrupt because these donations can be made in secret, which foreign companies and governments could be influencing our elections without us knowing. The Democrat says we need to change our corrupt political system so it works for real people, by limiting how much special interests can spend on our elections and requiring that all political donations are public.

Note: the initial Democratic attack was split between a focus on drug prices/wages and foreign money. Foreign money did slightly better with Independents, but the sample size is too small to be conclusive.